

MARVEL

3

**CATES
STEGMAN
MAYER
MARTIN**

KING IN BLACK



MIKE HOBSON 1936–2020



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELIOT R. BROWN



Last month, longtime Marvel Comics Publisher Mike Hobson passed away. In remembrance of his life and work, Mike's friend and colleague Tom DeFalco, former Marvel Editor in Chief, shared his memories of the Marvel luminary.

Many are the unsung heroes of the comic book industry. These people are the hidden giants who work behind the scenes — without credit, fanfare or fame — but are essential to the creation of your comics. They are people like Mike Hobson.

As a supervisor at Marvel, Mike was the greatest. He encouraged initiative, listened with an open mind and always supported his people. He rarely raised his voice and had a near-magical way of defusing tense situations. (Mixing creative people with those from marketing, sales or accounting is usually a recipe for disaster.)

Mike defined the word “gentleman.” He was refined and soft-spoken, had an infectious laugh and was an intriguing conversationalist, well-versed in a variety of subjects. He knew the best restaurants, the tastiest dishes, the most flavorful wines and the finest hotels. An invitation to dine with Mike was always a treasured event. He was the adult we all wanted to be when we grew up.

Whenever I think of Mike, two occasions spring to mind. One is the very first time Marvel sent me on a business trip by myself. Mike asked to see me before I left. I went to his office with pen and pad, expecting some last-minute business instructions. Instead, he told me to make sure I made lunch and dinner reservations and gave me a list of restaurants.

I also recall sitting in my office one afternoon when a furious Mike burst in.

“Do you know what those two idiots are doing?” He asked.

“Which two idiots?” I responded.

Mike glared at me for a moment and then suddenly exploded in unrestrained laughter. He actually fell into my couch, and it took him several minutes to regain control. It seems two of my editors had stuck a fishing pole out our seventh-floor window with an old Milky Way for bait and were trolling for passersby. While Mike could appreciate the humor in the situation, he felt our editors needed to adhere to a higher standard of professionalism. That was Mike.

Mike Hobson was my boss and my friend. He will be missed.

Tom DeFalco
November 2020



KNULL--THE KING IN BLACK AND LORD OF THE ABYSS--HAS TRAVERSED THE GALAXY WITH HIS HORDE OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF SYMBIOTE DRAGONS TO EXTINGUISH ALL LIGHT AND LIFE IN EXISTENCE. HE HAD FINALLY ARRIVED ON EARTH IN SEARCH OF THE ONE CALLED BROCK.

EDDIE BROCK, A.K.A. VENOM, ATTEMPTED TO OFFER HIMSELF UP TO KNULL TO SAVE THE PLANET...BUT KNULL WAS LOOKING FOR EDDIE'S SON, DYLAN BROCK. AFTER STRIPPING THE SYMBIOTE OFF OF EDDIE, KNULL DROPPED HIS BODY FROM THE TOP OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING TO THE STREETS BELOW, LEAVING EDDIE IN A HEAP TO LATER DIE IN A LAB SURROUNDED BY A FEW REMAINING HEROES AND HIS SON, DYLAN.

OUR HEROES HAVE BEEN SPLINTERED, MANY TAKEN OVER BY KNULL'S SYMBIOTE HORDE, BUT THEY MUST FIND A WAY TO SURVIVE...EVEN THOUGH THINGS LOOK BLEAK.

KING IN BLACK

CHAPTER THREE THUNDER

DONNY CATES WRITER // **RYAN STEGMAN** PENCILER

JP MAYER INKER // **FRANK MARTIN** COLOR ARTIST

VC's CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER

RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & FRANK MARTIN COVER ARTISTS

LEINIL FRANCIS YU & SUNNY GHO [INTERLOCKING];
DECLAN SHALVEY [DRAGON]; **IAN DEDERMAN** [TATTOO]
KEN LASHLEY & NOLAN WOODARD [SPOILER]
VARIANT COVER ARTISTS

PATRICK McGRATH LOGO DESIGN
JAY DOWEN KING IN BLACK TRADE DRESS DESIGN
ANTHONY GAMBINO PRODUCTION DESIGN
DANNY KHAZEM ASSISTANT EDITOR
DEVIN LEWIS EDITOR
NICK LOWE EXECUTIVE EDITOR
C.D. CEDULSKI EDITOR IN CHIEF

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FOR EVERY DARKNESS,
THERE IS A LIGHT.

AN
OPPOSITE.
AN EQUAL.

BUT NOW...NOW
THAT LIGHT IS
DIM, WEAK. FOR
THERE HAS BEEN
SO MUCH LIFE
TAKEN FROM THE
UNIVERSE AS
KNULL HAS
RAZED HIS WAY
ACROSS THE
STARS.

BILLIONS
OF SOULS
GONE. ENTIRE
PLANETS
DEVOID OF
LIFE.

OF
LIGHT.



I FEEL
IT ALL.

THE NOTHINGNESS.
THE DEATH, WHERE
JOY AND PRAYERS
AND LAUGHTER
ONCE SANG IN THIS
WORLD...

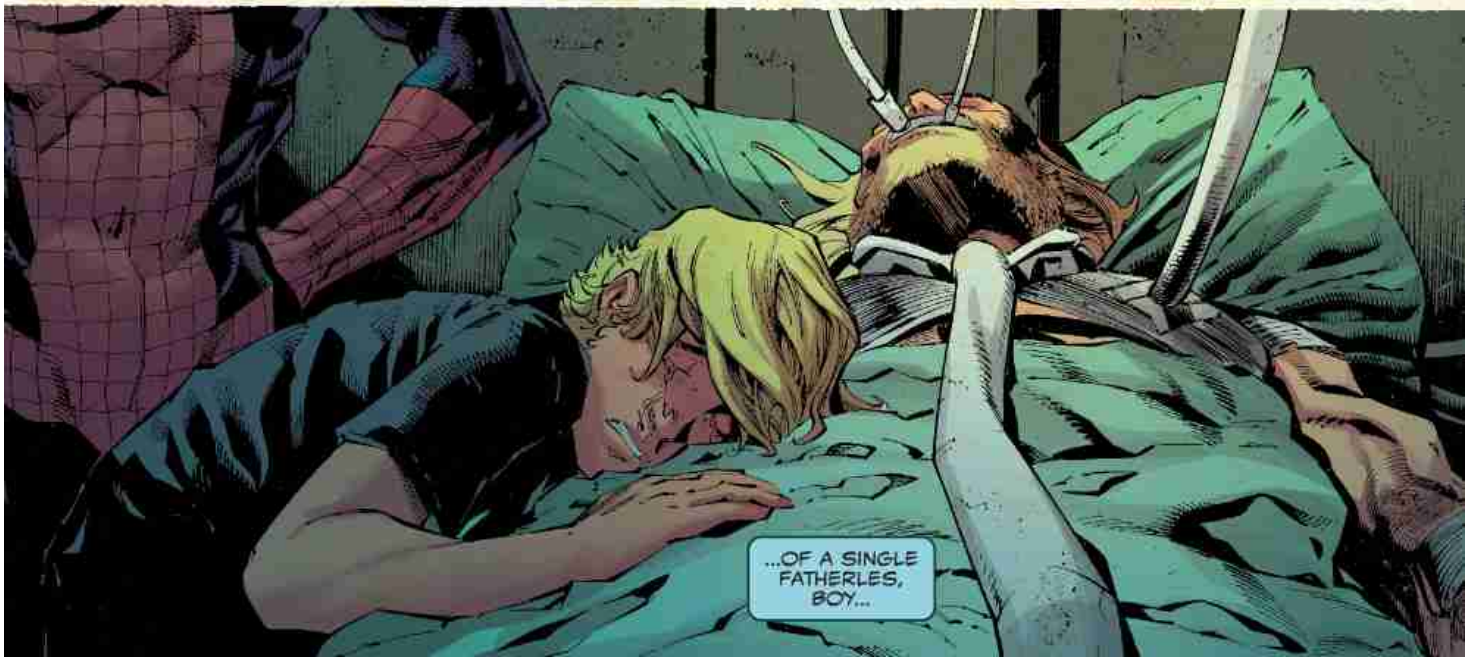


BUT
ABOVE IT
ALL...

...RINGING OUT TO
MY SENSES LIKE
A GREAT SIREN
ABOVE A RAGING,
STORMING SEA...



...IS THE
UNBEARABLE
SORROW...



...OF A SINGLE
FATHERLESS,
BOY...

...SURROUNDED BY A ROAR OF DEATH, ECHOING ACROSS THE BLACK CANYONS OF A CHOKING WORLD.

REED! WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING NOW IF WE'RE GOING TO DO IT! THERE'RE ONLY SO MANY OF THESE THINGS THAT BLADE AND HIS VAMPIRE ARMY CAN HOLD BACK!

I CAN'T KEEP THESE SHIELDS UP FOREVER! WHAT IS--

THOK

INCREDIBLE. I RECOVERED THIS DRIVE GIVEN TO EDDIE FROM A MAN NAMED WRAITH.* THIS INFORMATION IS ENCRYPTED BEYOND ANYTHING I'VE SEEN, BUT IT SEEMS TO LINE UP WITH WHERE DYLAN'S ENERGY COMES FROM...

IT'S AS IF IT'S...PULLING FROM SOMETHING. SOMETHING NOT FROM THIS WORLD. ITS SIGNATURE IS FAMILIAR SOMEHOW, BUT I CAN'T--

*BACK IN WEB OF VENOM: WRAITH! --EDITOR



REED!!! NOW!!

RIGHT.





YOU DON'T HAVE TO **DO** THIS. IF YOU SAY NO, I PROMISE I WILL SUPPORT YOU IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO OUT THERE.



OKAY. IT'S TIME. WE ALL HAVE OUR MISSIONS. ABOVE ALL, **PROTECT DYLAN.**

WOLVERINE AND SPIDER-MAN WILL ESCORT DYLAN OUT ALONG WITH BLADE AND THE VAMPIRES AFTER I BLOW THE DOORS OPEN.

HE'S THE KEY TO FREEING OUR ALLIES AND THEN...THE WORLD.

I'VE GIVEN YOU ALL COMMS EARPIECES, BUT XAVIER? SHOULD... YANCY STREET FALL?

YES. I WILL KEEP US ALL CONNECTED.

OKAY, THEN...



EVERYONE... READY?



HEY... DO YOU NEED A--

I NEED...



...TO HURT SOMETHING.



EVERYONE
ON ME. REMEMBER,
MOST OF THESE THINGS
ARE INNOCENT PEOPLE
TRAPPED INSIDE, BUT UNTIL
DYLAN CAN FREE THEM
AND GET THEM TO
SAFETY--
WAY
AHEAD OF YA,
WEB-HEAD...



TAKE 'EM
DOWN!



YOU THINK YOU CAN DEFEAT
ME, BOY? YOU ARE NOTHING
COMPARED TO US! WE
WILL DEVOUR THIS
PLANET!



AND NOTHING
WILL STOP
US!

SORRY,
CAP...



...GONNA
NEED TO BORROW
THIS.



RAGHHH!

I KNOW
YOU'RE IN THERE,
KNULL.

I KNOW
YOU'RE CONNECTED
TO CAP.

I HOPE
YOU CAN FEEL
THIS!



AND
I HOPE IT
HURTS!



AGH!



AH,
I SEE...
FINALLY...



THERE
YOU ARE,
CHILD.



UH...
GUYS?

I THINK
I PISSED HIM
OFF!

-KAFFKAFF-

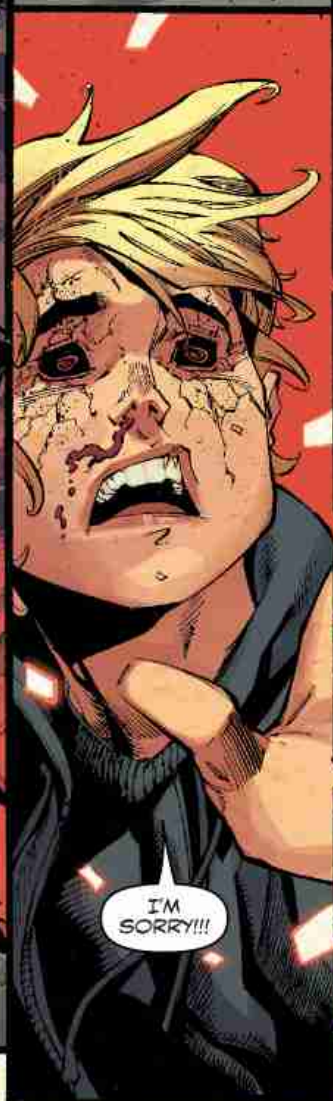
W-WHERE...



DYLAN?

WHAT...WHAT
IS GOING ON?
WHERE HAVE
I--

IT'S HIM!
I CAN'T--I
CAN'T PUSH
HIM BACK!



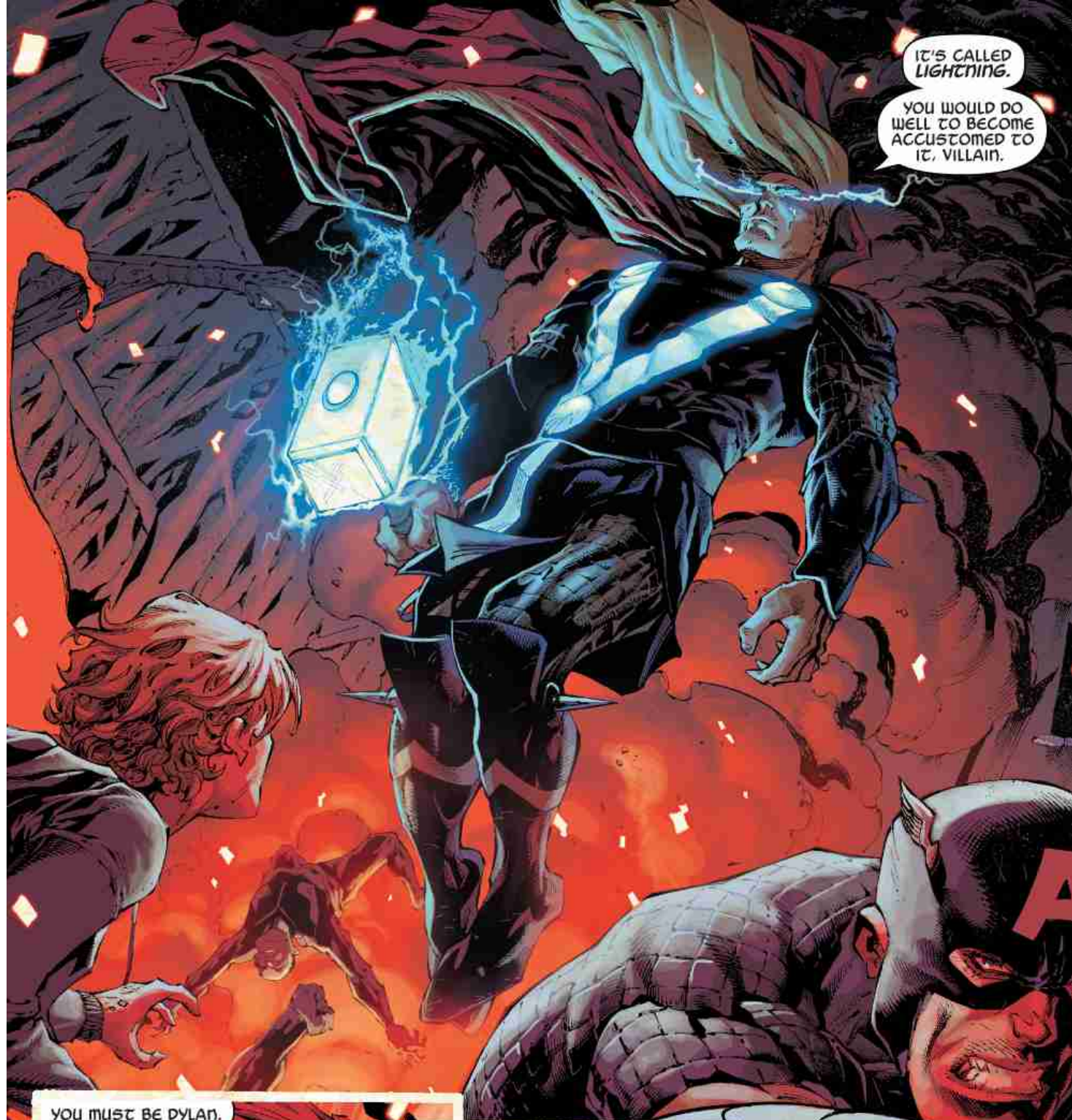
I'M
SORRY!!!



AGH!

NO!
THAT...THAT
POWER...
FAMILIAR...
BUT...BUT
HOW?!

WHA...
WHO
COULD...



IT'S CALLED
LIGHTNING.

YOU WOULD DO
WELL TO BECOME
ACCUSTOMED TO
IT, VILLAIN.

YOU MUST BE DYLAN.
I AM THOR.

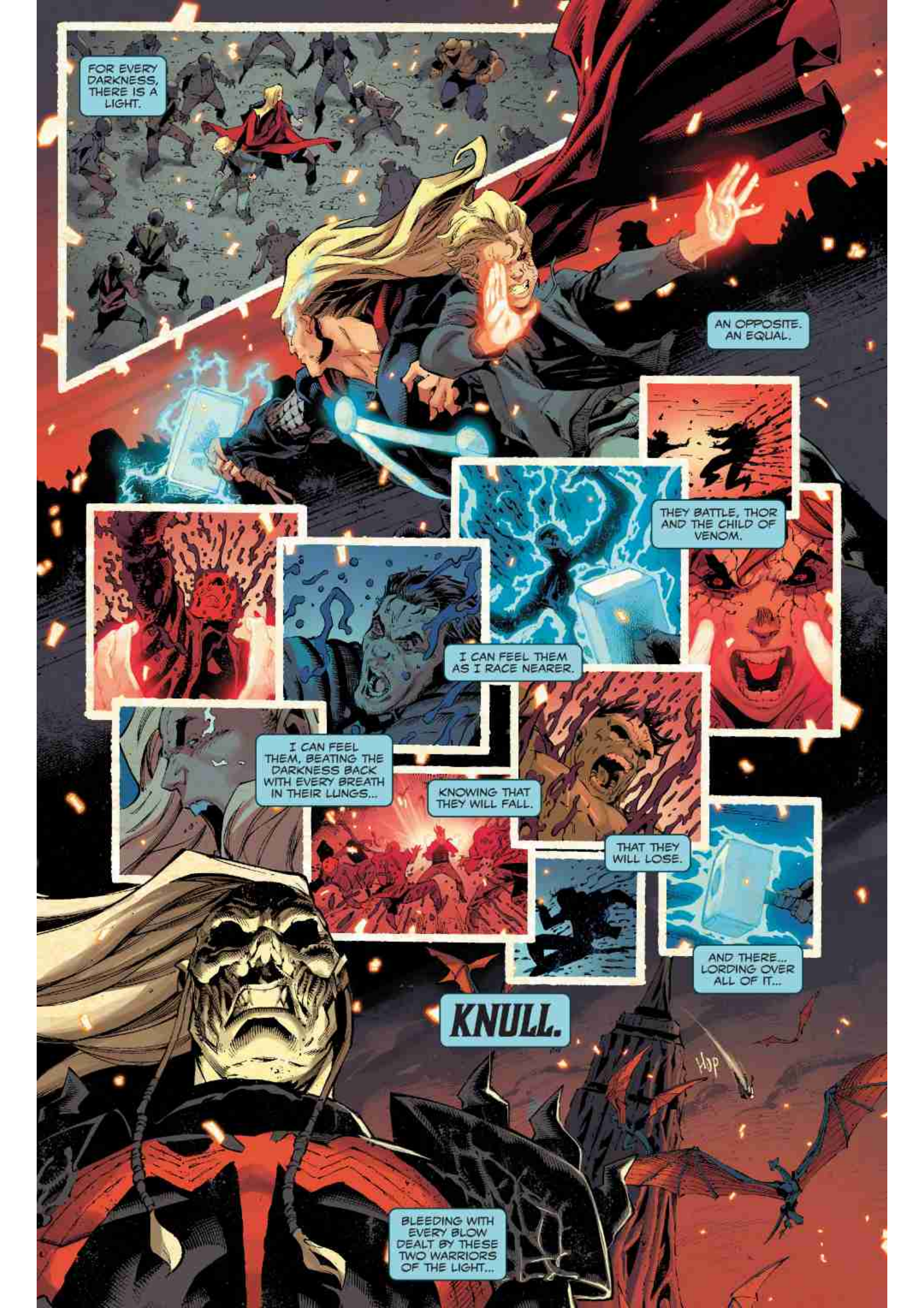
HOW
MAY I BE OF
SERVICE?

JUST HAVE MY
BACK. I CAN
DO THIS.

LITTLE
THUNDER
WOULD HELP
TOO.



AYE.
THAT...I CAN
PROVIDE.



FOR EVERY
DARKNESS,
THERE IS A
LIGHT.

AN OPPOSITE.
AN EQUAL.

THEY BATTLE, THOR
AND THE CHILD OF
VENOM.

I CAN FEEL THEM
AS I RACE NEARER.

I CAN FEEL
THEM, BEATING THE
DARKNESS BACK
WITH EVERY BREATH
IN THEIR LUNGS...

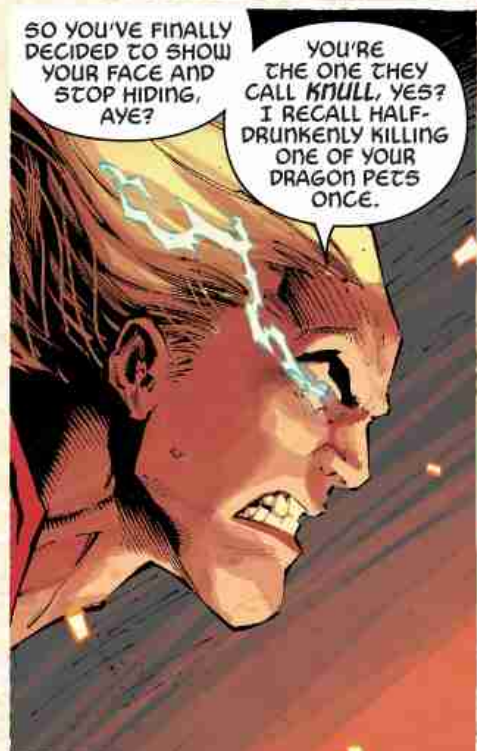
KNOWING THAT
THEY WILL FALL.

THAT THEY
WILL LOSE.

AND THERE...
LORDING OVER
ALL OF IT...

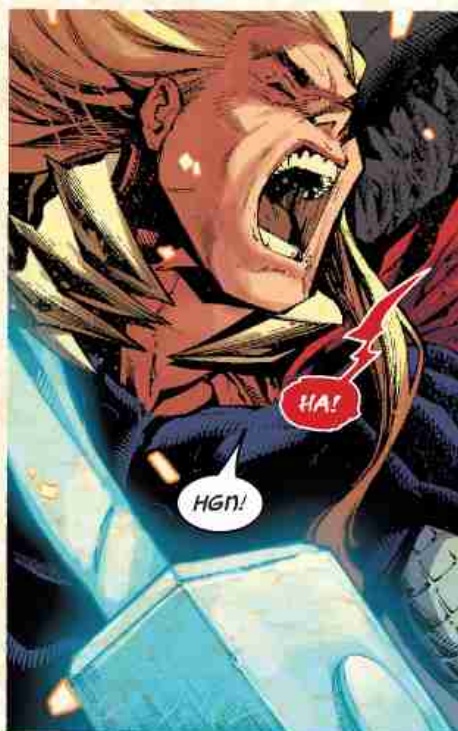
KNULL.

BLEEDING WITH
EVERY BLOW
DEALT BY THESE
TWO WARRIORS
OF THE LIGHT...





NOW, ALLOW
ME TO TEACH
YOU WHAT THOSE
WORDS TRULY
MEAN.



HA!

HGN!



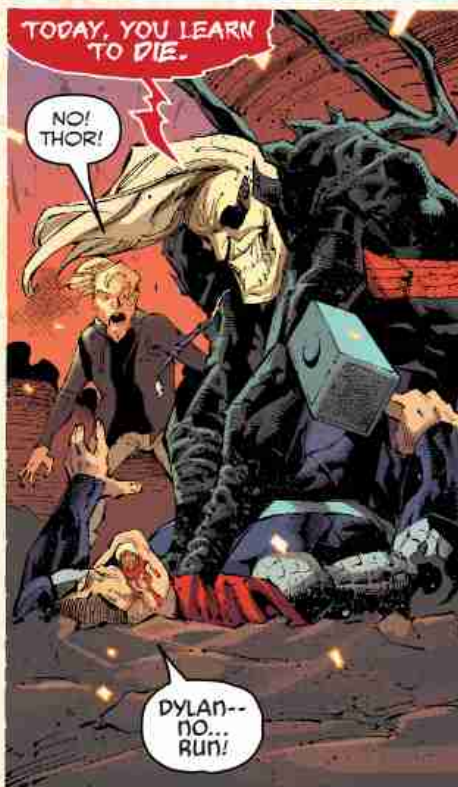
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU
CAN TEACH ME
ANYTHING...

SHRIE



...BUT I
WILL TEACH
YOU, LITTLE
GOD.

WHUMP



TODAY, YOU LEARN
TO DIE.

NO!
THOR!

DYLAN--
NO...
RUN!



WOOOOM

GET
OFF OF HIM,
YOU--

SILENCE,
BOY!



DON'T
YOU SEE?
THIS WORLD...
IS MINE.
YOU
CANNOT STOP
ME.



NAY!



MIDGARD
IS UNDER MY
PROTECTION,
AS ARE ALL THE
REALMS OF
THE WORLD
ASH!



I HAVE
KILLED **HUNDREDS**
LIKE YOU!!! ALL OF
THEM CLAIMED TO
BE THE ONE TRUE
DEATH!

THE
LIVING VOID!
THE END!



TO THAT I
SAY, I AM KING
THOR ODINSON,
GOD OF LIGHTNING
AND THUNDER AND
PROTECTOR OF
EVERY REALM IN
THIS GALAXY!!!

I SAY
WHEN IT
ENDS--





--AND I HAVE HAD
ENOUGH!!!

**KRRRRAA-
OOOONNN**



YOU--



YOUR...
WORLD WILL
BURN FOR...
THAT...

no!



IF YOU
CAN HEAR ME,
LOOK TO THE
SKIES!

EVERYONE,
READY
YOURSELVES!

KNULL
HAS AWOKEN THE
CELESTIALS!!!



IRON MAN,
THOR, WHO--
WHOEVER IS
AVAILABLE,
I NEED YOU
IN THE--

I HEAR
YOU! I AM
ON MY
WAY!

EVERYONE...



GRAB

EVERYONE
WILL BURN...



BBBWWAAAAA

SPITCH

AGHHH!!!

...AND YOU WILL WATCH.

YOU KNOW THE PAIN OF ALL-BLACK, DON'T YOU?

WELL...NOW YOU'VE HAD THE HONOR OF BEING KILLED BY ITS CREATOR.



DAMMIT! ANYONE! CAN ANYONE READ ME? WE NEED A PLAN!!! WE'VE LOST THOR, AND THOSE THINGS ARE GOING TO--

REED, CALM DOWN. THIS IS TONY. I'VE GOT THIS.

SOMEONE NEEDS TO GET THAT KID OUT OF THERE RIGHT NOW THOUGH!

YOU--YOU'VE GOT THIS? HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO FIGHT TWO CELESTIALS, TONY?



YOU
REMEMBER
THAT EXTREMIS-
INFECTED SYMBIOTE
I GOT AHOLD
OFF?



WELL, SINCE
THE KID FREED
IT FROM ITS HIVE...
WE'VE BEEN GETTING
ALONG A LITTLE
BETTER.

I STILL
DON'T UNDERSTAND...
SO YOU HAVE A DRAGON,
I DON'T---



THAT'S BECAUSE
IT'S NOT A
DRAGON.

IT'S WHATEVER
I WANT IT TO
BE. SO HOW AM I
GONNA BEAT TWO
CELESTIALS?



I'M
NOT.

I'M GOING
TO USE THIS
DRAGON TO
OVERRIDE ONE
OF THEM AND
MAKE IT MY NEW
FAVORITE
ARMOR...



...AND
THEN?

WELL,
MR. FANTASTIC.
YOU EVER PLAY ROCK
'EM SOCK 'EM
ROBOTS?

FOR EVERY
DARKNESS,
THERE IS A
LIGHT.

AN
OPPOSITE.

CLANG

AN
EQUAL.

I AM THE ONLY
FAMILY YOU
HAVE NOW.

COME
WITH ME.
LET US
TALK...

...MY
SON.

NO!

THERE IS ANOTHER. AN OPPOSITE
OF KNOLL. A GOD OF LIGHT. THE
SOURCE OF DYLAN'S POWER...

HUGINN,
MUNINN... SWIFTLY...
FIND HIM!

BUT WHILE KNOLL'S
DOME STILL STANDS,
IT CANNOT BREAK
THROUGH.

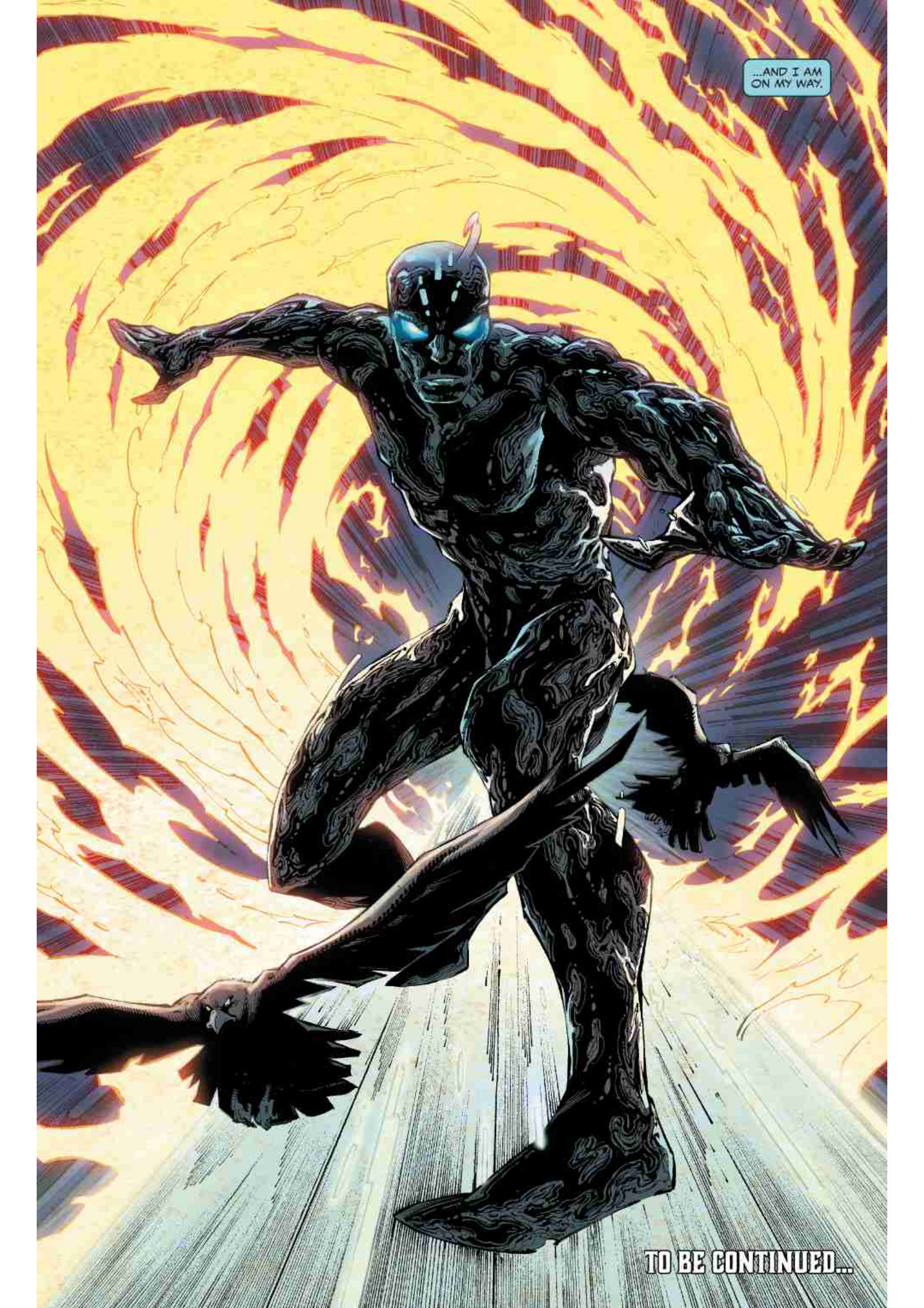
BUT I...

NOW
THEN... DYLAN
BROCK.

THE
CHILD OF MY
CHILDREN.

DO NOT BE
AFRAID.

I CAN...



...AND I AM
ON MY WAY.

TO BE CONTINUED...

KNULL HAS ARRIVED AND HAS BROUGHT HIS SYMBIOTE HORDE WITH HIM, PROVIDING OUR ARTISTS WITH A FUN EXERCISE ON...

KNULLIFIED VARIANTS!

SEE BELOW FOR A BREAKDOWN OF THE ISSUES, HEROES AND ARTISTS THAT JOINED IN THE FUN OF OUR KNULLIFIED VARIANT PROGRAM! --DK

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #54



SPIDER-MAN BY
PAULO SIQUEIRA & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

AVENGERS #39



BLACK PANTHER BY
GREG TOCCHINI

BLACK CAT #1



BLACK CAT BY
TAURIN CLARKE

BLACK WIDOW #4



BLACK WIDOW BY
SKAN

FANTASTIC FOUR #27
THE THING BY JUAN FERREYRA



CAPTAIN AMERICA #26
CAPTAIN AMERICA BY JULIAN TOTINO TEDESCO



DAREDEVIL #25
DAREDEVIL BY KEN LASHLEY & NOLAN WOODARD



GHOST RIDER: RETURN OF VENGEANCE #1
GHOST RIDER BY KYLE HOTZ & DAN BROWN



CAPTAIN MARVEL #24
MS. MARVEL BY TRADD MOORE



MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #21

SPIDER-MAN BY INHYUK LEE



GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #9

EMPYRE'S END CREW BY RYAN BROWN



SHANG-CHI #4

SHANG-CHI BY KHARY RANDOLPH & EMILIO LOPEZ



IMMORTAL HULK #42

SHE-HULK BY ALEXANDER LOZANO



IRON MAN #4

IRON MAN BY DAVE RAPOZA



WOLVERINE #8
WOLVERINE BY DAVE RAPOZA



SPIDER-WOMAN #7
SPIDER-WOMAN BY PEACH MOMOKO



X-MEN #16
STORM BY IDAN COELLO & JESUS ABUATOV



VENOM #31
VENOM BY FRANCISCO HERRERA & FERNANDA RIZO



THOR #10
THOR BY KEN LASHLEY & NOLAN WOODARD





CHECKLIST

☒ **VENOM #32**

REST IN PEACE.

☒ **RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1**

THE VALKYRIES MUST SAVE THE SOUL OF THE SENTRY!

☒ **SPIDER-WOMAN #8**

JESSICA DREW BREAKS BAD AS DARKNESS FALLS ON MANHATTAN!

☒ **SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #3**

SPIDER-MAN TRAVELS THROUGH SPACE TO THE SEVERED HEAD OF A CELESTIAL, BETTER KNOWN AS KNOWHERE!

☒ **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #10**

THE GUARDIANS WEREN'T FAST ENOUGH TO SAVE EARTH FROM KNULL—BUT CAN THEY SAVE THEMSELVES?

☒ **KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #1**

A BATTLE OF THE BANDS LIKE NO OTHER: GWEN STACY VS. MARY JANE WATSON!

☒ **KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #3**

TIDES RISE AS NAMOR'S SECRET PAST SPILLS OVER!

☒ **KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1**

THE SYMBIOTES SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH? NOT IF SCREAM CAN HELP IT!

☒ **KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #1**

WILSON FISK, MAYOR OF NEW YORK, HAS TAKEN MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS...BY ASSEMBLING A TEAM OF VILLAINS TO SAVE NEW YORK!

☒ **S.W.O.R.D. #2**

TO SAVE THE GALAXY, THEY MUST SAVE ONE OF THEIR OWN!

☒ **THE UNION #2**

THE GLOBAL ASSAULT OF SYMBIOTES SPARES NO VICTIMS!

☒ **KING IN BLACK #3**

WHAT'S A GOD TO A KING?

☒ **DAREDEVIL #26 (PICTURED)**

MATT MURDOCK AND ELEKTRA MUST EACH FACE THE DELUGE OF SYMBIOTES CONSUMING THE CITY!

☒ **BLACK CAT #2**

FELICIA IS TASKED WITH SAVING DOCTOR STRANGE—WITH ANTI-VENOM?!

☐ **DEADPOOL #10**

MONSTERS BEWARE—IT'S KING VS. KING FOR STATEN ISLAND!

☐ **KING IN BLACK: BLACK KNIGHT #1**

DANE WHITMAN, THE BLACK KNIGHT, LEARNS THE HORRIBLE HISTORY OF HIS LINEAGE AND THE EBONY BLADE!

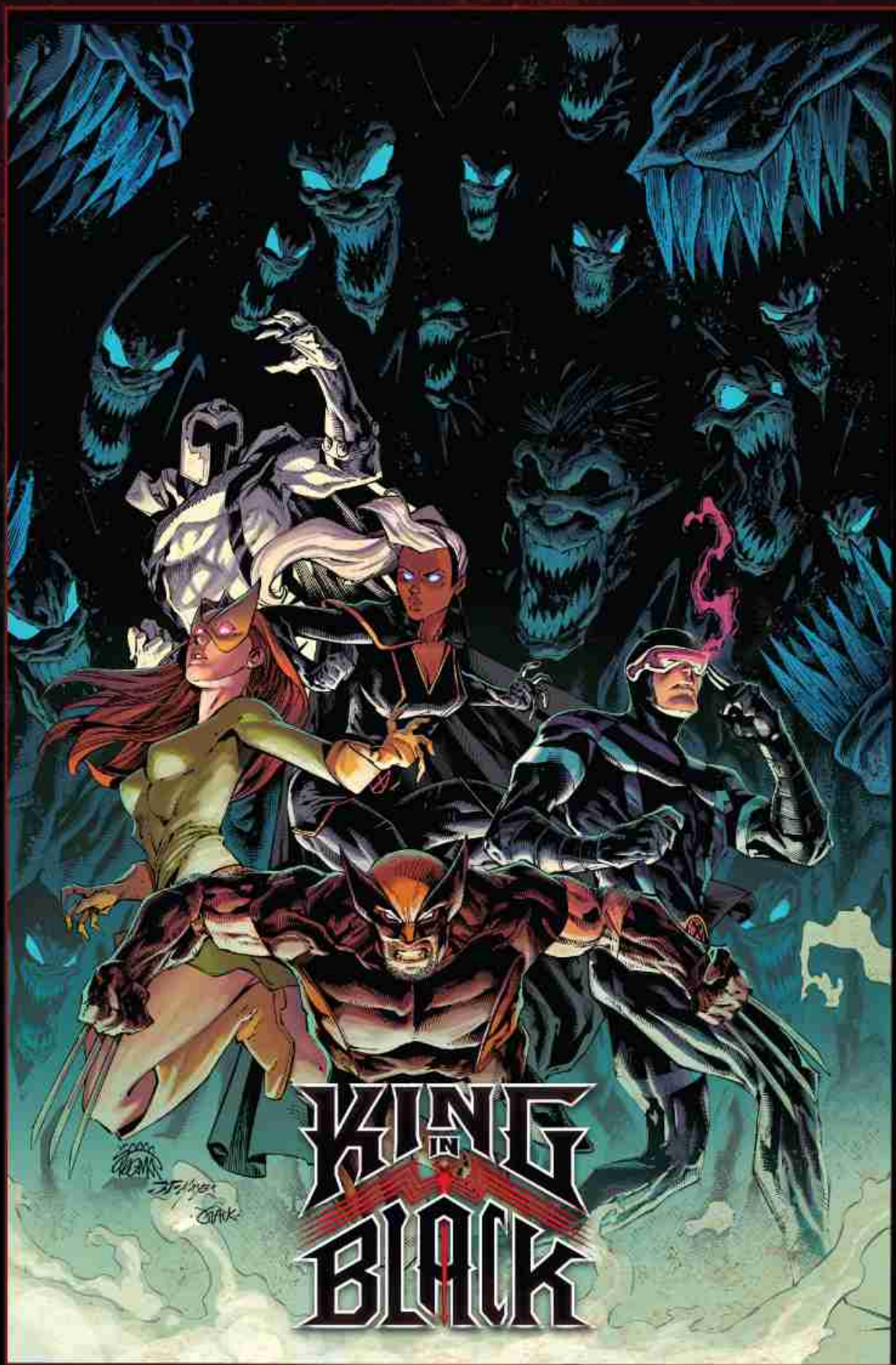
☐ **RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #2**

THE VALKYRIES LEARN MUCH MORE IS AT STAKE THAN JUST EARTH WHEN THEY FIND A LARGE SPIRIT LOOMING ABOVE THE PLANET!

☐ **SAVAGE AVENGERS #17**

CONAN AND DEADPOOL BREAK OUT OF RYKER'S AND ENTER THE FRAY OF SYMBIOTE DRAGONS!

NEXT:



KING IN BLACK #4

